

Identification of Strengths & Opportunities for Prevention & Diversion

PREVENTION, DIVERSION & RAPID RESOLUTION / EXIT **SERVICE NEEDS & HOUSING BARRIERS**

STRENGTHS		VULNERABILITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Income <input type="checkbox"/> Employable Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Short Experience of Homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> No Disabling Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Good Health <input type="checkbox"/> Completed Education <input type="checkbox"/> Wellbeing / Positive Self Image / Optimism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Self Care and Independence <input type="checkbox"/> Has Own Ideas on Pathways to Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonably Good Credit <input type="checkbox"/> Has Recent Positive Rental History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Disabling Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Use <input type="checkbox"/> No Income <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Education <input type="checkbox"/> High Risk Behaviors <input type="checkbox"/> Long Experience in Homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Episodic Homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Unsheltered <input type="checkbox"/> No access to basic needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hoarding / Collecting <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy / Children <input type="checkbox"/> Age: Young / Elderly <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Trauma <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Self Care Capacity <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Daily Living Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental disorder / compromised cognitive functioning <input type="checkbox"/> Depression / Hopelessness
OPPORTUNITIES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive Family <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive Congregation <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> SOAR – SSI/SSDI/SS <input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility for Housing <input type="checkbox"/> SNAPS / Income Supports <input type="checkbox"/> Child Support <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing Market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pension Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> VA Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Services <input type="checkbox"/> Day Labor <input type="checkbox"/> Child Protective Services <input type="checkbox"/> School Homeless Liaisons <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Services <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Protective Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence <input type="checkbox"/> Victimization <input type="checkbox"/> Debts <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord Discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> No Rental History <input type="checkbox"/> Bad Credit <input type="checkbox"/> Eviction History <input type="checkbox"/> Felony Conviction/Criminal History <input type="checkbox"/> No Social Networks <input type="checkbox"/> No Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Unresolved Legal Issues <input type="checkbox"/> No Health Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> Ineligible for housing <input type="checkbox"/> Sex Offender <input type="checkbox"/> Unaffordable Housing Market <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Discrimination
BARRIERS			

HOUSEHOLD / INDIVIDUAL

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

DIVERSION/RAPID RESOLUTION DIALOGUE AND PROBLEM SOLVING

ASSETS for DIVERSION / RAPID RESOLUTION		PROBLEM SOLVING ACTIONS
STRENGTHS:		
OPPORTUNITIES:		
NEEDS and SERVICE CONNECTIONS		PROBLEM SOLVING ACTIONS
VULNERABILITIES:		
BARRIERS:		



HOW TO USE THE HOUSING PLAN

Key Principle: The Housing Plan is a tool designed to coordinate activities between door agencies. This helps guide conversations when working to support persons independently exit homelessness or prevent them from entering the Homeless Serving System of Care. This will assist work in finding housing, eviction prevention, assessing and tracking referrals to community resources. If all door agencies are utilizing a similar tool individuals will not need to re-tell their story, and a Housing Strategist will be able to follow-up on existing referrals or identified action steps.



Inform the client it is your job to help identify resources and opportunities. If they mention the SPDAT – inform them we are no longer utilizing this assessment and are utilizing the NSQ. Please refer to the Needs & Services Information booklet for any further questions.

http://calgaryhomeless.com/content/uploads/NeedsServicesQuestionnaire_Info_Booklet.pdf

If the client is in crisis you may need to work on a crisis plan such as accessing the 211 system, SORCe mental health clinician, DOAP team or CPS.



Use some of exploratory questions the first time you meet with the client to understand their situation. Search for an existing HMIS client file, if one does not exist start an HMIS file and identify at least one action item or solution for barriers identified by the client based on the exploratory questions.

You can proceed to the Housing Plan if there is time or ask them to come back another day after they have completed their action item.

Locate and negotiate potential resources. Spend time on warm transitions and referrals – make the calls with them.



Keep accurate and timely case notes in HMIS indicating action items to be follow-up on and be sure to update the Housing Plan.

Every time you meet with a client, identify a strength in their life.

Always leave the client with one step they can follow-through with independently.

EXPLORATORY QUESTIONS

Question	Answer	Problem Solve Actions
Why are you seeking help with housing?		<i>What resources or referrals can be provided to assist with the need?</i>
What brought you here today?		
Where are you from?		
Do you have any family or friends that you would be able to stay with, even as a short-term option?		<i>Can we try to reconnect with them? Do you have a name - Google the person and send a message. Try to call them, together.</i>
What services have you tried already, or in the past?		<i>Can we try to reconnect with them? Do you have a name or a worker?</i>
How did that work for you?		
What have you considered doing to help your housing situation?		<i>What type of assistance can you offer with this plan?</i>
What is stopping you from the above plan - even for the short term while other options can be explored?		<i>What type of assistance can you offer with this plan?</i> <i>Housing Search</i>
What would you identify are your primary barriers to obtaining housing at this time?		<i>Explore - what other barriers are preventing the individual from obtaining or maintaining housing at this time, and what referrals or supports can we put in place to address those barriers?</i>

NOTES:

MY HOUSING PLAN

Date (MM/DD/YY): _____ Follow-up Date (MM/DD/YY): _____

Today I met with (name of worker): _____

Contact Information: _____

Staff are responsible for: _____

My goals are:

My biggest strength right now is:

My action steps are:

1.

2.

3.

How will I do it?

Additional Resources:

Support Map for _____

Family

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Community Assistance Programs

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Friends

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Other Community Resources

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Name: _____
Contact Info: _____
Type of help: _____

Name: _____
Strengths: _____
May need support with _____

Assessing for & Appropriately Responding to the Housing Needs of Domestic & Sexual Violence Survivors: A Decision Tree as an Alternative to a Scoresheet

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SAFE HOUSING
PARTNERSHIPS

safehousingpartnerships.org



National Resource Center
on Domestic Violence

nrcdv.org

Brief and Focused Conversations to Determine Housing Needs *Key Questions and Phrases*

Active Listening:

"What I'm hearing you say is..."

"So, it sounds important to you that..."

"It sounds like you'd like to prioritize..."

Providing Options:

"Let me tell you about the different options we may have to choose from and then we can figure out together what might be best."

"Many people assume they have to leave their homes in order to be safe, but we may be able to help pay for some things that would allow you to stay in your home, if you'd like to consider that..."

Demonstrating Empathy:

"I'm so sorry this is happening to you..."

"I know this is extremely difficult for you..."

"Everyone is different and has their own issues and concerns. Some people have criminal records, or are dealing with drugs or alcohol, or have family issues that impact their safety and housing...I want you to feel like you can talk to me and tell me what is going on for you that would help me help you get safely and stably housed."

Negotiating Options:

"I really wish we had a housing voucher to give you. Since we don't, what do you think about...?"

"The shelter is full right now, but I might be able to locate a hotel voucher. Do you think that would be a good immediate option right now? Do you have a family member or friend that would be a better option?"

Redirecting Conversation:

"I know that's a really important concern of yours and I'd like to come back to it, but right now I'd like to make sure we're focused on getting you into housing. Is it okay if we go back to....?"

"Mmmhmm, okay....and can I now ask you about...?"



Adopting Housing Problem-Solving Approaches with Prevention, Diversion, and Rapid Exit Strategies

Home, Together, the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness in America, recognizes that to end homelessness, every community must have in place a systemic response that ensures that homelessness is a rare, brief, and one-time experience. Using a housing problem-solving approach can prevent homelessness and help people exit homelessness more quickly.

Adopting a housing problem-solving approach means helping households use their strengths, support networks, and community resources to find housing. It should be attempted with virtually everyone interacting with the homelessness services system, often more than once.

Housing problem-solving is not a new project type or component, and it typically does not operate as a standalone program. Instead, [housing problem-solving techniques](#) are used within existing programs across the entire homelessness services system.

Housing problem-solving approaches support the effective implementation of [homelessness prevention, diversion, and rapid exit strategies](#) – strategies that should be a part of every coordinated entry process and are offered as potential housing pathways for all populations.

Adopting a housing problem-solving approach across your system utilizes potentially untapped resources and may significantly improve communities' system performance measures. Housing problem-solving can reduce lengths of time homeless, numbers of households experiencing first-time homelessness, and the share of households returning to homelessness.

Housing Problem-Solving: The Practice

Housing problem-solving starts with conversations intended to:

1. Identify the household's strengths and existing support networks;
2. Explore safe housing options outside the homelessness services system, even if temporary when a part of a diversion or rapid-exit intervention; and
3. Connect the household to community supports and services.

Effective housing problem-solving involves much more than simply asking a prescribed set of questions. It is carried out by skilled, trained, and flexible staff who engage in open-ended, exploratory conversations to understand a household's strengths and existing support networks. These staff members use empathy, active

listening, conflict resolution, and mediation skills, and draw on their understanding of and access to community-based resources.

Housing problem-solving explores options that the household may not have been able to identify or felt comfortable enough to explore on their own. After identifying options, staff members determine what other types of services or supports may be necessary to make the identified option a reality.

Sometimes the solutions are as simple as mediating a conflict with a family member or connecting a household to community resources like health, social services, and employment. At other times, the solution might include one-time financial assistance. Since financial assistance isn't always necessary, communities can implement housing problem-solving regardless of whether financial assistance is available. Of course, there may also be instances when ongoing follow up is necessary to provide continued support to families as they work through conflict or other challenges.

Below are examples of services and financial assistance, depending on the funding support that may be available, that can be provided as part of a housing problem-solving approach:

Services could include:

- Strengths-based case management
- Conflict resolution
- Housing search
- Landlord-tenant mediation
- Connection to mainstream resources
- Family mediation
- Tenant legal services
- Credit repair

Financial assistance might be used for:

- Rental application fees
- Security or utility deposits
- Utility or rental arrears
- Moving costs
- Bus, train, or airplane tickets to help facilitate return to family
- Food assistance
- Car repairs, bus passes, gas, vehicle repairs, and other expenses for job-related transportation
- Costs associated with obtaining identification documents
- Employment supplies, like uniforms, work boots, or cell phones
- Employment-related training certifications

Conclusion

As communities implement multiple strategies to prevent and end homelessness, adopting a housing problem-solving approach across the system will better serve households experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Calling upon natural support systems, mainstream resources, and limited financial assistance, skilled staff can help a household avoid homelessness altogether or help them exit to housing rapidly and retain stable housing.